

Radio programming has had most impact when producers have had an unswerving audience-centered focus, a clear understanding of what radio can do, and a boldness to experiment.

Too often, and especially in the Christian context, radio producers are unaware of the diversity of the roles of radio. This book is written that producers might draw on a wide range of experiences in training and consultancy in radio programming, in Asia and in other parts of the world.

Fourteen roles of radio are described. Tools and activities are provided to help producers and program directors find the answer to this question: What role can radio most effectively play in meeting our listener's needs? The Gray Matrix, an innovative planning framework for radio programmers, identifies how the various roles can be applied in different contexts. When producers look at a program schedule and a listener's needs from this new perspective, their strategic thinking is sharpened, their energy renewed and their creativity inspired. They will also better understand how much of their current programming may be missing the mark.

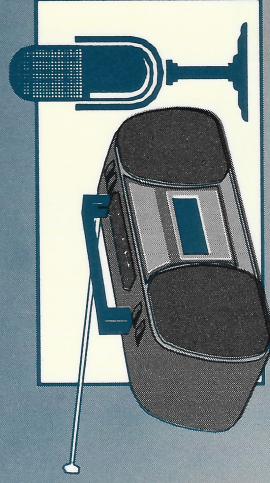
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# RADIO PROGRAMMING

## ROLES:

## FEBEC PERSPECTIVES



**FRANK GRAY**

*with*

**ROSS JAMES**



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**FAR EAST BROADCASTING COMPANY**

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## INTRODUCTION

... to develop radio programming and deliver it to listeners in Asia in such a way that they move toward Jesus Christ and into His Kingdom, that they know Him as Saviour, Lord and King, follow His teaching, and live in obedience to Him as His servants, and as members of a local body of believers.

To put it another way, our purpose is to be agents for restoring *shalom* to a broken world. *Shalom* is the peace and harmony and blessedness God intended for creation. This is the essence of how we define Christian radio programming, using radio programs to express *shalom*: meeting the needs of our listeners in a holistic way, enabling them to become all that God intended them to be.

This book is functional without being overly theoretical. It describes fourteen roles of radio from FEBC's perspective and explains how they could be implemented. It is a refreshing way of planning, clarifying programming direction, and revealing new opportunities for meeting our listeners' needs. While expansive theory is not explicitly included here, communication theory and research form a solid foundation and are implicit throughout.

My hope is that producers will use it to structure and guide workshops that review programming schedules and assess how those schedules can be shaped to more effectively achieve our mandate.

**Jim Bowman**  
Chairman, FEBC-International

Radio production planners and producers are product-oriented, geared up to putting together an on-air product. It's only natural, then, that formats such as drama, interviews and so on, are often a first consideration in program planning meetings. But deciding a format is just like selecting a frame for a picture: it is best left until after the picture is painted. The decision and choice is to complement, define and enhance the intended impact of the picture. Similarly, in the process of planning communication strategy, formats are a secondary decision.

The key and necessary first step is to consider what radio can do, a decision based upon an appreciation for the versatility of radio and the multiple roles it can play in communicating the Gospel.

Recognising the flexibility and potential of radio, FEBC encourages the development of new programming approaches. Over the years, we have demonstrated a capacity for programming innovation, perseverance and relevance. Programmers in different areas, in different circumstances, have utilised radio in a different number of roles.

This book has two aims. The first is to briefly outline fourteen roles of radio that apply to our programming and provide practical examples. Some roles identified may appear to overlap or fall more

completely under another category. Certainly, other roles could emerge if these were further clarified. The second aim is to make the point that we must give greater priority in our planning process to this question: What role of radio will most effectively meet our listener's needs?

The fourteen roles provide examples of the wider use of radio. Experience has shown that looking at a program schedule and listener's needs from this new perspective sharpens strategic thinking and inspires producers' creativity.

## ROLES OF RADIO

How can program strategy planning be helped by considering the perspective of roles? Some synonyms for *role* include scope, range, part, function, capacity. When we apply the word *role* to radio, then, we are highlighting what radio can do and how it can do it.

Increasingly, we are enmeshed in an information technology era. *Infotech* has become a new word in our vocabulary as computers revolutionise the process by which we communicate globally from our offices and even from our own homes. Satellites and other technologies today offer new delivery systems which open up a vast new range of opportunities for live and immediate programming over a wide area.

The *infotech* era has ushered in new dimensions of communication which have an impact on us (information providers) and on the listeners (information consumers). First, democratic ideals and community development practice stresses participation. Our audiences expect more of a say in how they live and work, and how they are governed. Second, there is a trend for governments to de-regulate and privatise media. This means more competition for us. Third, because new information technology ushers in more technological options, information or media, consumers have more to access and choose from. The fourth implication is that we radio broadcasters need to become more segmented in our thinking to provide

programs more finely attuned to specific audiences with specific information needs.

Florangel Rosario-Braid (1995), who has helped inspire and provide structure to what we call *development communication*, maintains that, in this infotech age, non-commercial or non-profit broadcasters (such as FEBC) have a vital part to play.

The fourteen roles explore ways of ministering to our listeners, meeting the needs of both unbelievers and Christians, using radio in appropriate and relevant ways.

## 1 INFORMATION — News and Current Affairs

Most people tune in their radios to hear the latest news. The integrity of radio stations often depends on the calibre of their informational programming — the better their coverage, the greater their credibility. Throughout the world, there are societies where news is suppressed or manipulated by corrupt or authoritarian regimes. Multitudes of people are eager to find global broadcasters who reach out to them, and satisfy their need for trustworthy and objective coverage of world events.

In meeting this need, purely as an act of service alone, Christian radio stations attract significantly wider audiences. But much more than that — Christian broadcasters thus place themselves

squarely in the arena of contemporary history. News is history in the making — and God is the author of history. His purposes, and His truths, abound in the unfolding global drama of news and current affairs.

Christian news broadcasters thus demonstrate Christian concern for life and the world around them. This is a dynamic part of the Gospel which relates to everyday life.

When a Christian fails to take note of the world around him — locally and globally — he is in effect saying that the message of the Gospel has nothing to say to the contemporary world. This does the Gospel a profound disservice. Christian stations which delude themselves into thinking that their programming need not relate to news events, lose their penetration. They lose out on vast potential audiences who would never tune in to Christian stations purely to hear Bible teaching. Yet such non-believers are drawn to listen when they hear Christian programs present trustworthy, interesting and illuminating coverage of the events which shape the world they live in.

This has two implications for Christian broadcasters. First, we need to select our news topics with discernment, and treat them editorially with great care. We should not report events in a way that exalts worldly values. We should *interrogate* raw secular material to filter out bias, prejudice and false assumptions. We should not necessarily accept

the approach to a news event adopted by the secular media — a Christian perspective is necessary. This is particularly relevant to secular stories which dwell on salacious detail, or obsessively see news events through political and material eyes, at the expense of the human dimension.

In Christian news journalism, the biblical watchword is *test everything* with spiritual as well as professional discernment. Done conscientiously and well, news-related contributions to programming have a sharp cutting edge. News programming graphically portrays situations and events where, in real life, God is at work and also where Satan's prevailing influence is evident. News analysis can interface directly with Bible teaching, or — at a pre-evangelism level — simply highlight Kingdom values instead of those of a fallen world. News programming directly engages real situations throughout society.

News eloquently tells the story of a fallen, sinful world. By doing so it provides a ready platform for the Gospel — the Good News.

## 2 ENTERTAINMENT — Enjoyment and Relaxation

Along with news and information, entertainment is the most obvious and popular role of radio.

Programs with music, humour, human interest, drama and other forms bring entertainment into the kitchen, bedroom, office, department store, car — even the paddy field — inexpensively.

Some might immediately doubt whether Christians should be thinking about entertainment. But consider this: communications practitioners in health promotion and community development know that if their key message is wrapped with a layer of entertainment, listeners pay greater attention to it, remember it, and are more likely to act upon it. Development communicators use *edutainment* or *infotainment* communication techniques, where entertainment and education or information is blended in a radio program.

Every program should have entertainment value if the listener is to stay tuned. At a minimum, this means the program is well-produced. More than that, it should provide something to raise the listener's spirit and satisfy his more aesthetic needs. Isn't it interesting to note that when God created trees he not only made them functional (providing fruit, materials for building, etc.) but also pleasing to the eye so that we might enjoy them?

Let's take a brief look at the main areas of entertainment: music, popular culture, human interest and humour.

## 2.1 Music

Music has the ability to raise the spirit and minister to the human soul at a level which words alone cannot do. It creates an effect or atmosphere to support a few carefully selected words which will have a greater impact than a lengthy monologue. Certain kinds of music are especially valuable in raising the human spirit, warming the heart, softening the emotions and calming fears. All these need to be seen as accomplishing a part of what we are seeking to do as Christian broadcasters. A simple presentation of aspects of the Gospel should follow naturally on from many kinds of music.

Having said that, however, we recognise that we embark into a minefield of controversy because tastes in music, not least Christian music, differ so widely. What constitutes good music for one may be the devil's music for another. Apart from certain theological issues no other area of Christian interest causes more controversy or division. FEBC has therefore drawn up guidelines (rather than rules) which help describe what factors need to be considered in selecting music for our programs.

The key to successful music programs largely depends on two broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of the intended audience and their musical tastes, and (2) the program producer/presenter having both a broad working knowledge/appreciation of music and a commitment to Christian values.

Station management needs to provide strong support for the music program producer since music selections will no doubt come under fire from segments of the Christian community who may not approve and may feel that their financial support appears to be going to waste.

## 2.2 Popular Culture

The term *popular culture* refers to those creative, artistic, activities that people engage in for relaxation and entertainment. These include, for example, books and magazines, travel, sport, music, movies/videos, visual art such as drama, paintings and fashion (e.g. clothing).

Radio can address these and cover them through book or movie reviews and discussion or interviews with the creative talent associated with them. If the facilities are available, outside (remote) recordings or live broadcasts can be made of productions taking place in the community. FEBC's classical music FM station, DZFE in Manila, occasionally broadcasts live concerts and is seen as a champion of this type of music.

Productions promoting values that contradict the Gospel and its values should only be used for illustrative purposes, and only after careful thought as to the implications for local believers, and the likely response from listeners and authorities. FEBC's music guidelines might also be used to provide



direction for programs addressing popular culture issues.

### 2.3 Human interest

Real people with real stories from real life are a winner. Our experience is that, too often, they are overlooked by the Christian broadcaster who stays inside his studio. FEBC's Vietnamese service kicks off its broadcast every day with a 5-minute human interest story which listeners can warm to.

All over the world, the most effective radio programs, apart from music and news, are those that give insights into people, their lives, the things that make them laugh or cry, their hopes and despairs, their failures and their victories. Often they can be used without comment and do not need to have any Christian content at all, although they may illustrate Christian values.

Different formats such as interviews, discussion, stories, biographical books or sketches can bring people into programs. A major format is drama which recreates daily life and projects the listener into a participatory experience. The listener inter-acts with drama rather than remaining a recipient of information. He identifies with characters and situations, experiencing them without feeling threatened. Christian values such as love and forgiveness are much more effectively modelled

through drama than verbally talked about or explained. Traditional dramatic forms can often be easily adapted into the radio medium.

### 2.4 Humour

The light-hearted side to radio can do more than demonstrate that Christians can have fun and enjoy life. Truth can be communicated by those who know how to use humour skilfully and appropriately.

Humour is culture-bound, so we need to appreciate that humour is, in most circumstances, best performed by those who know their own culture.

## 3 INSTRUCTION — Functioning as Teachers

Radio is a marvellous medium for instructing, or providing advice where needed, especially when listeners are spread over a large area. Radio has been used to teach listeners about agriculture and health, and to gain skills in science, maths, learning a language and a wide range of other subjects. In one case, radio was even used to teach students how to draw, and it was found to be more effective than a television program on the topic!

In the Christian radio context, instruction programs fall into two broad categories: community development and Christian education.

### 3.1 Community Development

Community development is the process of enabling communities to identify, plan, and implement action to change and improve their living and environment.

Why should the Christian broadcaster involve himself in community development programs when his main interest lies in spreading the Gospel?

There are many ways we could answer this. We could look at our definition of the Gospel or our understanding of the Kingdom of God. We could look at the Scripture records of how God and Jesus concerned themselves with the well-being of people. We could take the view that as we have freely received so we should freely pass on to others who are less privileged. We could justify it on the basis of our responsibility to the community and meeting the felt needs of those around us. It is a good way of saying we care and serve our listeners. Or we could say that it is simply a good way of attracting listeners.

The point is that Christian radio has a role here. This type of programming demonstrates our concern for the well-being of our listeners as well as reflecting a Christian worldview. By doing so we earn the right to be heard in matters of more direct Christian significance. Community development programming can have a direct relationship to church growth, as shown in FEBA's experience in Mozambique and

elsewhere. In one Asian country, several churches were planted due to an agricultural program which contained no religious content or reference to Christianity. Farmers began listening to Christian programs before and after the agriculture program. A local pastor reported that he was now welcome in the farmers' community because he was known as the friend of the program producer. As part of a coordinated, balanced, program schedule community development programs can have a significant impact.

The aims of community development are to involve, motivate and instruct the community to take part in their social, economic, physical, and spiritual development. Participatory programs in which listeners contribute to the purpose, design, and content of programs, help link listeners to community leaders and others who can provide functional information. It also gives communities a "voice" to express their views and desire for change.

Programs can educate people who cannot afford the education or training they need, where they have neither the time nor opportunity to attend classes, or where there is a lack of teachers or other resources. Programs can supplement or complement what is already being taught in classes. Radio is widely used for educational programs for schools and universities.

Functional information helps listeners in their work, life and family. We can cover important issues

relating to human rights, conflict resolution, tolerance, understanding, citizenship and cultural values. Health and agriculture programs are obvious topics for us in many of our broadcast fields. Radio is especially useful in times of national emergencies such as disasters where rapid and specific information is needed. Other types of instruction might include topics such as computing.

Study programs that teach the English language are popular. Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) by Christian broadcasters remains a field of largely untapped potential. With newly emerging economies (such as Vietnam) rapidly trying to catch up with the rest of the world we find a great hunger for learning English.

We may even find opportunities to work alongside government projects or as part of a government campaign. In some countries which are closed to the Gospel, supplying educational programs or training to produce them, may be ways of building and establishing credibility.

The use of radio for community development is a specialised area and a training module has been developed to help FEBC do this well.

### 3.2 Christian Education

Christian radio programs provide practical teaching at relatively low cost — especially because believers

are motivated to listen. This is true of believers in closed countries. But even in open country situations, such as the Philippines, radio is a valuable tool for bringing low-cost Christian education to those who cannot afford to leave home to attend a Bible School.

The classic example of this in FEBC has been the long-standing Bible School curriculum that has been taught to Christians in China since 1980. After careful research and planning the 3-year *Village Bible School* (VBS) was put on-air on both medium- and short-wave for two hours each night. Four weeks were taught at the rate of three lessons per week and repeated the following evening. Literature and cassette materials used to maximise the teaching were distributed inside China to those who enrolled. After two cycles VBS was upgraded to a 4-year course under the name of *Voice of Friendship Seminary*. The project has been a co-operative one from the start as FEBC has worked with other Christian organisations (which also provided program materials).

#### 3.2.1 For unbelievers

While we should not assume that there are large numbers of unbelievers interested in studying the Bible we may be surprised to discover that there may be significant numbers who are curious to find out more about Christian belief. We'll look at this a little more in the role of Apologetics below.

Perhaps the issue in this section is more related to how we do it. What creative ways can be developed to interest the listeners enough to make them want to come back for more? It may be better strategy to use the radio program as a means of whetting their appetite. For example, use the program to promote a Bible correspondence course so that the listener can be put on the road of studying and discovering the Bible for himself.

### 3.2.2 *For believers*

Instruction for believers is easy for Christian producers to produce because we're in familiar territory and we have a ready audience. The common mistake, however, is that we overlook the creative side. The time of broadcast, the style as well as the content, sometimes suggest that we expect listeners to be doing serious Bible study while eating their breakfast!

Any teaching of Christians should be based on observed needs, depending on the circumstances. Closed country situations, such as China, have left Christians with little trained leadership, few Bibles, and wide open to heresy and cultic practices. A priority might be a solid grounding in the basics of the faith. Practical issues might also be addressed, such as running a church fellowship, pastoral counselling, learning new songs, etc.

In the refugee camps of Southeast Asia there were frequent problems among the new believers. Among pastors would write to FEBC asking for teaching that would address the issues — in the knowledge that what was taught by radio had high credibility.

## 4 ADVOCATING CHANGE — Being Change Agents in a Broken World

The mass media make things happen when they act as an advocate, heightening the awareness of critical issues in society, bringing about change and being used to resolve conflict.

There is a great need for alternative media to give minorities a voice, addressing issues of relevance to them that may not be covered in mainstream or official media. Another function is to produce programs that bring such concerns to the attention of authorities and decision-makers. In different parts of the world, this has successfully been achieved through participatory production strategies (see pp. 46-48).

Rosario-Braid (1995), has argued that broadcasters such as FEBC have a great potential for providing strategic information. Why? Because we are an alternative to state-owned or commercial media, we are impartial and are concerned for the whole person. Secular media are unlikely to be interested

in much of what interests us. Programs relating to new ideas, social movements and issues, politics, development or emerging trends, will facilitate the listeners' access to information, broaden their horizons and empower them to act.

FEBC Manila has used radio in this advocacy role. In the early 1980s a Manila faith healer gained great prominence through radio. Using the stage name of *Johnny Midnight* he claimed to mediate healing to his listeners by a process known as *toning*. He adopted the name because his late night radio show started at midnight. Johnny Midnight invited the listener to place a glass of water on top of the radio. After conducting a series of incantations he told the listener to drink the water and receive healing.

The program provoked a great stir in Manila, raising the fascination in occult practice and causing confusion in the churches. FEBC medium wave station DZAS intervened. The station took off its regular programs, replacing them with a day-long *marathon* which investigated the occult practice from a biblical perspective and invited listeners to phone in with their questions. As a direct result many were greatly helped. Some lit bonfires to burn occult books and other paraphernalia. It was not long before the *toner* was off the air!

This was the first of a series of marathon broadcasts conducted by DZAS in response to specific social

issues. Another celebrated victory was in 1985 when the Maharishi Technology of the Unified Field was poised to take over Manila's financially bankrupt University of the East (one of the largest in Manila). Many in the capital had been successfully wooed by a multi-media campaign that also had brought the Marcoses (the presidential family) and a number of government officials onto their side. A visiting cult expert provided the backbone for much of FEBC's day-long broadcast. The Maharishi people were angered by the transmission, demanding equal time, which they were denied. With their movement exposed to be nothing more than thinly disguised Hinduism, all of its imported supporters (more than a thousand) were on planes out of the Philippines within a week.

## 5

### INSPIRATIONAL —

#### Hope, Friendship and Companionship

FEBC's radio ministry was launched in 1945 in the wake of the widespread turmoil and destruction in Asia brought about by World War II. Hardly before FEBC could get organized, China was plunged into darkness by communism. FEBC rallied in response to this crisis. Russia had already succumbed some thirty years earlier, and within the next thirty years Indochina was to follow. In other parts of Southeast Asia other listeners were living under the oppression of Islam.

A very significant part of the Christian's witness is to bring hope and inspiration into a dark world. Just as Jesus' birth brought light to those who walked in darkness so we must also. It was clear to FEBC that its mandate, from the beginning, was to minister to those in closed countries and that this required providing inspiration and hope to those denied freedom under totalitarian governments. Inspiration in turn leads to companionship and friendship and a special relationship develops between listener and broadcaster.

No one knew how successful FEBC's inspirational ministry to China was until the country emerged from behind the Bamboo Curtain in the late 1970s. The inspirational role of Christian radio, especially during the days of the Cultural Revolution, began to surface.

The process of bringing hope and encouragement is as much by our attitudes as by specific programs — but certain program types lend themselves especially to this application. Devotional programs come to mind. For China it was the daily devotional program *Streams in the Desert* (named after the book of the same name) which became a great source of inspiration — to Christian and non-Christian alike. For the Russians it was the familiar voice of Jack Koziol bringing encouragement from the Word.

But this role does not only apply to those living under totalitarian governments. Regardless of political and religious systems we have an important role in offering hope as part of the Gospel.

**6****POSITIONING —****Promoting Awareness of Christian Social Concern and Action**

All over the world Christian humanitarian organisations are actively involved in relieving human suffering and providing hope to the needy. This is not just in community development projects — providing water, education, agriculture, health, refugee relief, rehabilitation services — but in other ways. Local churches are involved in their own community while Christians in their own professional field engage in worthy projects, motivated and influenced by their Christian principles.

Sadly, the world largely does not hear about these things. Often, they remain ignorant and maintain their negative stereotypical attitudes to Christians and churches. When they do realise that they are seeing or receiving and experiencing Christian love in action, there is a positive change in attitude and response.

We radio producers have a distinct duty to position Christianity and its adherents in this way. It not

only changes the attitudes of those who may be antagonistic, but encourages, inspires and empowers believers when they hear of the good works their brethren are doing elsewhere.

Our programs can focus on topics or issues that draw attention to what Christians are doing in society. Some Christian development agencies such as World Vision have produced programs that feature what they have been doing. This not only serves to give them publicity but, more importantly, helps us demonstrate as a body the concern and love that Christians are translating into action. It also serves as a complementary function to a words-and-sound-only ministry like radio.

## 7 WITNESS — Testifying to God's Presence and Activities

The main point here is that this is God's world. It does not belong to Satan — although that is the appearance given. Those who live lives according to the Kingdom of God are those who live *right-side up* in an upside down and fallen world.

In Romans (ch. 1:20) we are told that the things of God are to be plainly seen. We are called to be witnesses to this truth which, while obvious to us, is not shared by the unbeliever who has a different worldview and interpretation of life. As media people, a large part of our job is to help people discover this truth for themselves, to help people to see.

The question is *how*? Testimonies of how God has worked in the lives of individuals, or even communities, is one of the most compelling ways of doing this. Listeners can readily identify with those whose stories and testimonies bring the Gospel down to earth. FEBC's files are filled with stories of listeners whose lives have been changed — often quite dramatically. We sometimes hear of whole communities that have been changed as a result of becoming Christian.

Christian radio broadcasting has made a profound impact on the Hmong people of China and Southeast Asia over a period of years. In Laos the Hmong would listen to FEBC broadcasts from Manila and decide to become Christian. Often a village would send a delegation to Vientiane, the capital, in quest of a pastor or missionary who could lead them into the faith. In one such village five families at first decided to burn their demon paraphernalia and become Christians. This later grew to thirteen families, then twenty-one. Because of this stand they decided to shake off their opium-smoking habit which entailed some villagers being sent for rehabilitation. As the Gospel began to make an impact on their lives the Christian villagers became more industrious — and this attracted further assistance from aid agencies. After a few years entire Hmong villages were transformed. They became economically productive and a living testimony to the Gospel.

True stories like these go over well on radio. A news or documentary format might be the most suitable. Personal testimonies might require more sensitive treatment so as to respect the individual's privacy and, where human rights are ignored in certain situations, their security.

Another possibility is through documentaries on nature topics, to acknowledge the hand of God in nature. How many of us watch wildlife movies on TV with amazement, and wonder how the presenter so unashamedly refers to *Mother Nature* as a substitute for *God*? Evidently the latter is offensive while the former is not. We can do something about this.

Very often in Asia, when people are faced with natural disasters or spectacular displays of the forces of nature, they ask, *Is God trying to tell us something?* This was the case in Indonesia at the time of Mt. Galunggung's eruptions. In the Philippines the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 had a similar effect. People with a supernaturalistic worldview tend to look to deeper meaning behind these events, thus providing a window of opportunity for introducing the God of creation. Even man-made disasters can produce the same kind of questioning.

Christian production studios, such as the Christian Resource Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand,

have produced nature programs with scripts written by experts. One of them, *Nature Shows the Way*, explains the marvellous intricacies of nature and attributes them to God's handiwork.

8

APOLOGETIC —

Comparing Christian Belief with Others

Unfortunately, the English word *apologetic* is misleading. Its similarity to *apology* suggests that we have to make excuses for what we believe. This is not the case. The name stems from the first and second century Apologists (or *Defenders*) represented by Justin Martyr. These writers defended Christianity by both answering criticism directly and by setting out the truth of the Gospel in the framework of Greek philosophy.

The method Justin employed was to seek common ground between the Gospel and current philosophy, and to build on that common ground a case for the superiority of Christian faith. Apologetics addresses itself to the task of making a rational presentation for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It appeals to the mind rather than the emotions. It challenges the presuppositions and foundations of prevailing belief and value systems by addressing their inadequacies and inconsistencies.

This does not mean that we develop a lot of *high-brow* programs for intellectuals. It does mean that



we need to understand the worldview of our intended audience, so that we can consciously address aspects of their worldview which are inconsistent with the Gospel.

For example, for the past twenty years the whole educational system in one country has been brought into line with the teachings of an atheistic worldview. This system teaches that man is in control of his own destiny, that everything can be rationally resolved, and that everyone works for the ultimate good of the State as the highest authority. In visits to such countries we are appalled to discover societies characterised by a distinct absence of any set of underlying values — even in the area of ecology.

The individual raised in this environment learns to suppress his feelings and submit to the system. His life is controlled by fear and he learns to be seen as not wanting to stand out from the rest. He is also only looking out for himself and his own good, while denying any appearance of behaviour associated with free society.

It is not hard to see that the Gospel and Christian principles stand in direct opposition to many of these instilled values. Moreover, we know that God has made us in His image so that our spirits might respond to the higher order of life accorded to us by the Holy Spirit.

One FEBC program producer in a predominantly Buddhist country has gone to great lengths to relate to his own culture. He has studied hard to understand Buddhism by learning much of the Buddhist language (Pali). He never gives the impression that he is alienated from it or the culture which surrounds it. Standing in a Buddhist temple he recites with great detail the intricacies of Buddhism and how the system serves the community. This love of his own culture combined with his working knowledge of Buddhist religious language (and consequent understanding of Buddhism) has done much to make him a master of relating to his listeners — particularly monks and those intimately acquainted with the teachings of Buddhism.

In reasoning with devout Buddhists he will ask them what it is that drives them to offer sacrifices in front of the images and idols. He then tells them that it is the inner hunger put there by God himself which prompts them to reach out and worship their Maker — even though they don't know him. The approach is very reminiscent of Paul's address on Mars Hill. Many have come to faith as a direct result.

Through careful programming we can help our listener to recognise and respond to these inner promptings, helping him to see that there is another way of looking at life. We need to point out the inconsistencies of atheistic belief and its total

inadequacy to explain those God-given instincts of love and beauty that take us beyond a bottom-line human existence.

An important part of FEBC's broadcasts to Vietnam has been this apologetic role. It was designed to address the cadres and those who had been influenced by their teaching. Given that a whole generation has been educated under a school system dominated by Marxist philosophy there are many areas of life for which they have no answers. They have also been taught to suppress both their inner feelings and questions induced by this system.

Is it not important, therefore, to raise these issues with the listener so that he might see for himself the inadequacy of teaching that leaves no place for a Creator God who has also provided us with a sense of beauty and a desire for love?

But we should not limit our apologetics to addressing communist, Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu belief systems. In today's world materialism provides a more sinister challenge since it appeals to man's desire for possessions and his innate greed. Addressing secular humanism requires that we understand it. But more than that, we need to find creative ways of bringing secular man back to a recognition of the more important issues of life from which he is running away. We need to help him "strip away the toys" from his life, as C.S. Lewis would say.

## 9 PROCLAMATION — Declaring the Whole Gospel

Again, we must first explain our terms so as not to be misled by the English terminology. A ministry of proclamation in biblical terms is concerned with declaring truth unashamedly and with clarity.

We take our cue from the Old Testament prophets who spoke the words of God. Although we make the mistake of confusing the word *prophecy* with foretelling the future, proclamation is what the prophets did: warning of coming judgement and the return of Christ as well as clearly stating the truth about God and the Gospel of the Kingdom.

In our attempts to make creative programs we Christian producers sometimes neglect to give a clear presentation of what the Bible teaches. As former FEBC Program Director, Carl Lawrence, once said: *We are in danger of saying nothing — beautifully.* We also stand in danger of going to the other extreme and include talk of sin, judgement, forgiveness and eternal life in every program! This is a recipe for quickly losing an audience and suggests the producer's understanding of the Gospel and his role as a communicator is seriously inadequate.

Although we need solid exegetical teaching of the Word of God to accomplish the proclamation role,

the content and format should be relevant to the listener, the listening context and the radio medium. Radio audiences are not church congregations. Monologue may be the most practical and appropriate format in certain situations. More effective transmission is likely through creative use of other formats (or frames to frame the picture). For example, group discussion, dialogue or interviews will convey the message just as effectively if not more so.

## 10 COUNSELLING — Being Close to Our Listener

Radio presenters become *friends* rather than mere personalities in the lives of their listeners and our programs offer the opportunity to minister to them in personal ways.

A counselling role can take two forms. There is off-line (mail correspondence) counselling or on-line (through phone-in programs). Obviously, local circumstances will dictate what can be done.

FEB's Manila station, DZAS, provides counselling through its *Heartline* program which comes on air at 10:00pm each night. Each night the scene is set for a specific theme and listeners are invited to respond. A trained counsellor takes the phone calls in the studio after the callers have been previously screened off-air. Some callers are diverted to off-air counsellors while selected ones are put through to the on-air counsellor.

Experience around the world shows that such programs, especially at night, are relevant and have great impact. The busyness of the day no longer crowds out underlying fears and problems and with the closing in of the night comes the darkness of their problems and feelings, loneliness and despair.

Letter counselling is also effective. For international broadcasts it is the only option at present, but this could change with on-air studios in target areas being linked to international stations via satellite. Letter counselling is not so program-intensive but, in order to be of maximum effect, follow-up staff need to work closely with program producers and presenters to ensure that programming relates closely to the people who write and what they write about. A golden rule of effective letter counselling is that the primary questions of the letter-writer be responded to — whatever they are. Some questions may seem totally irrelevant to the ministry of the Gospel, but many first-time writers are often checking out the Christian station. If they receive a sympathetic and friendly response it will open the way for more contact.

In Myanmar, letter counsellors are divided into three categories. The first is the befriender whose objective is straightforward: befriend the writer and win his confidence. After several exchanges of correspondence a tract may be inserted in the letter — but without comment. If this generates some kind of response then the writer will subsequently

be referred to the second level of counsellor. Deeper spiritual questions are turned over to the third counsellor. These letters require a much deeper level of understanding, experience, and spiritual insight. This approach has proved to be most effective and has been the means of hundreds of listeners coming to faith each year. Listeners are also encouraged to personally visit the offices for face-to-face encounter — a regular occurrence.

One great attraction of radio stations is the anonymity for listeners who have problems which are taboo in their own culture or which cannot easily be asked of friends or family. Many writers from India seek advice for sexual problems and difficult relational problems. Where else could they get it? The station must honour this level of privacy. That is why localised follow-up of listeners may not always be wise.

Letters can be answered on-air for different reasons. The listener's question could be representative of many others who would also like to ask the same question. Another reason is that sending a reply by letter may endanger the listener (for contact with a Christian station) or it may have little chance of arriving. There is also an *eavesdropping* effect. Listeners like to hear about other peoples' real life problems — and the advice being given. In many instances, presenters can ask other listeners to send in their advice or experience. Research has shown that this participatory effect of listener-involved

programming is very effective. The short-wave program *Mailbag* in Manila has probably been one of the most popular in FEBC's Overseas English service.

## 11 SUPPLEMENTARY

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *supplement* as 'a thing or part added to remedy deficiencies or amplify information.' Supplementary programming has the role of filling in the gaps or meeting observed needs — as best we can — through the responsive use of radio.

In FEBC's experience we have exercised this role especially by providing radio programs that help, teach and encourage believers in situations where the local church cannot meet their needs.

This role is an ultimate test of radio's flexibility. It calls for us to set aside preconceived notions about what radio is good for and allows us to experiment with less-conventional uses of radio in response to specific needs.

A clear illustration of this principle was the use of Bible dictation programs for China. In China's case it was driven by a specific need. Under communism Bibles were destroyed, imports were banned, and printing was prohibited. For a long time, the only viable means of getting scriptures to the mainland

Chinese, apart from smuggling, was via dictation by radio. For 17 years Bible dictation was a regular feature of FEBC's broadcasts to China. In the studio one person dictated from one side of the table, while a second person across the table wrote down what he said to make sure the reader kept to the right pace. In 1980 a well-known China researcher estimated that more than half the Bibles in China at that point were hand-written. It is a testimony to the effectiveness of a format (dictation) that we don't usually associate with radio programs.

Another aspect of this role came to light when we discovered that, for many listeners, Christian programs served as a church. Listeners in Japan would tell us so. Chinese house-church leaders declared it was so. Listeners in Russia for many years met in small groups around their radios, eliminating the need to register with the government (because they were not large enough).

Developing radio churches is not something we encourage. We do not want to establish our own electronic church denomination. Instead we prefer to steer people toward their own local fellowship of believers. But while our underlying philosophy of Christian broadcasting stresses the need for seeing our listeners brought to Christ and incorporated into a local fellowship of believers we also need to recognise the reality. For various reasons, the reality is that many listeners have no local church

fellowship, or don't have access to teaching or worship opportunities. We are their church.

Responding to such needs in a responsible way extends beyond Bible teaching to include instruction on such things as how to organise a Christian fellowship group, teaching hymns or songs of worship. At the same time it encourages new believers to reach out to other believers or pray that God would put them in touch with others who are listening.

A recent innovation has been the *Dawn China* project in which Chinese radio programming promotes the planting of churches throughout China. The program series presents the biblical basis for reaching out and provides practical know-how and encouragement. If the present Christian congregations number around a half million in China, and if they each plant two more by the end of the century, the congregations will triple to 1.5 million. In this example we see radio as part of a two-step strategy for evangelism and church-planting.

**12****CELEBRATION —****Celebrating with Joy the Gospel in all its Fullness**

Christians should not neglect the importance of joy — celebration and enjoyment. What will our listeners think if, while looking to their radios for entertainment and relaxation, they often find heavy, serious, issue-oriented subjects and presentations?

A role of programming is to demonstrate what we have to celebrate and how we celebrate it. Music and other art forms are ideal ways of expressing this. But do we do enough of it? Singing has always been one of the characteristics of Christianity. It is a sign of joy and happiness — attributes that communicate powerfully with the human spirit.

Of course, we need to consider what is appropriate in different programming contexts, so that we don't give the wrong impression to our audience and create misunderstanding. Authentic expressions of joy, praise and worship must be found for each culture so that they will be recognised, have meaning and be understood. Radio can do much to propagate and popularise these expressions of worship.

The *Papuri!* (Praise!) project in the Philippines offers an excellent model for this. *Papuri!* was set up in 1979 to encourage the development of authentic musical expressions of Christian faith within the Filipino culture. For too long the Filipino church had depended on western music.

FEBC—Philippines staff felt the time had come for change (this, by the way, does not only apply to the Philippines!). Project organisers encouraged Filipino Christians to write their own songs in a national competition. A panel selected the best fourteen entries from around 300 submitted. The music was arranged by accomplished musicians and the resulting songs were recorded in the FEBC music studio.

A cassette album, launched at a series of concerts, was compiled from the winning entries and was accompanied by a songbook with complete music and lyrics. This became an annual event. The cassette albums are sold in department store chains and other outlets throughout the Philippines, and among Filipino migrant workers in the Middle East.

The quality of music, style and depth of expression improved and changed over the years. In the beginning the music tended to reflect personal testimony. Since then, the range has widened to include themes such as praise and worship, missions, Christmas and children's music. Sometimes, in response to certain social trends in the nation, the competition was based on a central theme. For example, during the turbulent years of political and social unrest in the Philippines in the mid-1980s, the 1986 *Papuri!* theme was 'The Sufficiency of God.'

Popularity of the music also prompted the development of an award-winning radio program of the same name. This program was made available to other radio stations and helped them satisfy the government requirement for a daily minimum of original Filipino music. Another by-product of the project has been the concerts it spawned in local churches. *Papuri!* singers formed themselves into an association. They are drawn from both FEBC and non-FEBC staff and are guaranteed a minimum number of performances a year. Churches contact

FEBC, requesting *Papuri!* singers to perform at special events such as anniversaries.

### 13

#### MODELLING — Demonstrating Christian Community

We cannot separate radio from community. Radio, used in the right way, fosters a strong sense of community and models Christian community to our listeners.

Most Christian radio stations are established on an interdenominational basis and so are already in the process of working across the denominational spectrum. A direct result of this is that Christians from a wide variety of denominations can all look to the station and say, This is our station. Radio has a unifying effect among believers. But how do we cope with shades in theological persuasion or denominational distinctives?

While there may be many ways of handling this, FEBC's program policy is quite specific:

In order to obtain an adequate supply of programs in certain languages it is FEBC's privilege to work in co-operation with other agencies who share a similar vision and have the means for producing such programs. These agencies may represent a wide spectrum of denominational backgrounds, but co-operation with them is welcomed so long as they also subscribe to the Lausanne Covenant. This is done in

full recognition of the fact that there may be some minor points of doctrine over which one co-operating group may differ from another. In such cases FEBC requires that, in dealing with such controversial issues, alternative views are also expressed and doctrines presented in such a way that the other group is not portrayed in a bad light.

This states quite clearly the delicate balance FEBC tries to preserve in its programming and co-operation with other partners.

But we can do more. By demonstrating our ability to function together in *community* we validate our message to the wider world. We can broadcast programs that provide news and information about other Christian groups. We can enter into partnership with organisations to help them extend their ministry or achieve their goals. For example, we may broadcast programs that support the field-work of a Christian community development agency. We might also air distance-education programs that help a Bible seminary be more effective by using radio to reach students spread far and wide. To demonstrate unity on air we could get people together in the studio and model for our listener how we as fellow believers can work together in spite of international and interdenominational differences. Another outcome of this is to reduce misunderstanding about the relationship between radio and the Church and disarm accusations of radio being isolated from the Church.

*Interdev* is one Christian organisation that has taken upon itself the responsibility of helping to forge partnerships among various Christian agencies with a shared interest. FEBC and FEBA have been involved in several of these, collaborating with non-radio agencies in a co-ordinated strategy. The process has often been lengthy because a lot of *history* has to be worked through and the various agencies and elements have to feel their need for each other. It has not been without pain, but where they have succeeded, these partnerships have been driven by the reality that, as they work together with a common purpose, they can not only be more effective in ministry but also better stewards of resources.

## 14 PARTICIPATORY —

### Interaction and Listener Involvement

The traditional understanding of radio has been that it is a *one-way* channel of communication. But as the dynamics of communication have become better understood radio has been effective where the community it serves is involved or participates.

The world is becoming increasingly interactive. Radio and TV stations are no longer mystical ivory towers where the powerful reside and influence the masses. Trends are leading us to a more participatory world which demands that we become much more relational and organic in our programming strategy.

The section on counselling focused on one specific aspect of interaction. But it has wider application. Not least of these is by encouraging the listener to participate in our programs.

Participatory program techniques say to the listener that he is important and that his opinions are both valued and heard. Experience in successful health promotion communication projects has shown that communities respond well to being able to participate in the planning, preparation and production of programs.

Often, this has been done by getting closer to the listener: speaking to listeners about their needs. In some instances this has meant taking production equipment into the field and producing programs there with listeners contributing. We could use stories, poems or other items from listeners sent in on cassette — or by letter or e-mail. When we have learnt to maximise the use of radio to meet listeners' needs in relevant ways, even at the expense of reduction in technical quality, then we have learnt something quite profound. We can give listeners a voice by providing feedback to enhance dialogue and understanding. Phone-in programs (talk-back) are very popular, and can also provide this dynamic in very significant ways. Phone-in presenters need unique skills and special training.

It is all part of the process of making ourselves vulnerable — and accountable — for what we are



doing and saying. We are an alternative for our listeners and our concern is for the whole person. The concept of interaction with our listeners needs urgent attention. As we move into the future communication inter-activity will become more a way of life.

## FITTING THE JIGSAW TOGETHER

The Introduction talked about pictures and frames in referring to individual programs and their formats. Let's use another analogy to see how the various roles inter-relate in the context of the audiences we are trying to reach — the jigsaw puzzle.

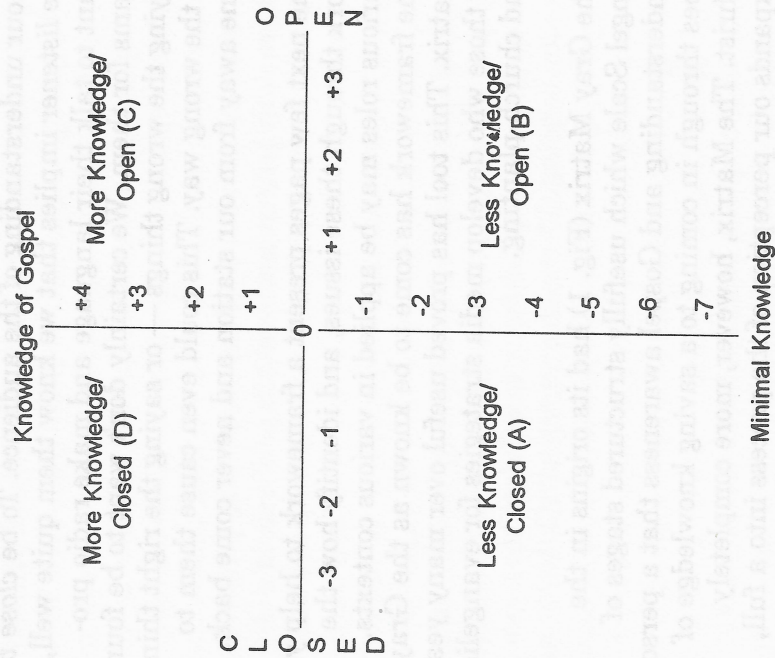
How does it all fit? Are some roles more important than others? If so, which? The answer to these lies in our understanding of the audience. To be close to the listener implies that we know them quite well, want to talk their language and make radio programs for them. We certainly don't want to be found saying the wrong things — or saying the right things in the wrong way. This could even cause them to tune away from our station and never come back.

The next few pages present a framework to help you work through these issues, and identify how the various roles may be applied in various contexts. The framework has come to be known as the Gray Matrix. This tool has proved useful over many years to those who develop media strategies for evangelism and church-planting.

The Gray Matrix (Fig. 1) had its origins in the Engel Scale which usefully structured stages of understanding and Gospel awareness that a person goes through in coming to a saving knowledge of Christ. The Matrix, however, more completely expands our perception of the process into a full,

two-dimensional model. It separates out the cognitive elements into the vertical x-axis (if we use mathematical nomenclature) while attitudinal dimensions belong to the horizontal (y-axis). A notable difference, also, is that in keeping with mathematical cartesian coordinates, positive numbers are represented upwards and to the right, while negative are the reverse.

Fig. 1 The Gray Matrix



The levels of -7 to +4 and -3 to +3 merely illustrate possible stages or phases, and do not imply a strict representation of the process.

The vertical scale depicts a person's awareness and knowledge of the Gospel, from a minimal awareness level of -7 through to a nominal +4 where the centre-point of 0 might be considered the conversion zone. (Zone is a preferred term since it is not always clearly defined. It might also be noted that the point at which a person's attitude moves from negative to positive is also not clearly defined). The peak of +4 is purely arbitrary, not intended to convey the impression that a person has arrived once a certain level of knowledge has been attained. It is a continuing process....

The horizontal axis depicts a person's openness to the Gospel and Christian teaching. On the left side we have those who are closed or who are rejecting it. To the right are those who are open and desire to know more. Expressed in another way we could say that those on the left are moving away from Christ, while those on the right are moving toward Him.

What does the Matrix demonstrate? There are four distinct quadrants which each display different sets of characteristics. The further from the centre point the more extreme are these characteristics while the closer to the centre the less pronounced they become. But in general terms people in the four quadrants display the following:

**Quadrant (A) — Less Knowledge/Closed**  
(bottom left):

- closed toward the Gospel and ignorant of it
- rejecting the message
- possibly opposed toward Christian outreach or evangelism
- hostile to Christians and church activity

**Quadrant (B) — Less Knowledge/Open**  
(bottom right):

- open toward Gospel and hungry to know more
- accepting the message
- welcoming toward Christian activity
- a ripe harvest field

**Quadrant (C) — More Knowledge/Open (top right):**

- born again Christians — members of a fellowship of believers (if there is one, and they are at liberty to attend)
- growing in Christ
- active in the Church
- bringing others to a knowledge of Christ

**Quadrant (D) — More Knowledge/Closed**  
(top left):

- a difficult group who have experienced conversion but have back-slidden or dropped out of active fellowship
- negative toward Christians and the Church
- spiritually 'cold'

The Matrix helps us in two very useful ways:

- 1 To determine what kinds of programs we need to make for our selected audiences — and what we need to be saying in them
- 2 To assess the suitability of existing services for reaching our goals

So, how does the Matrix help us understand our audience and what they need to hear?

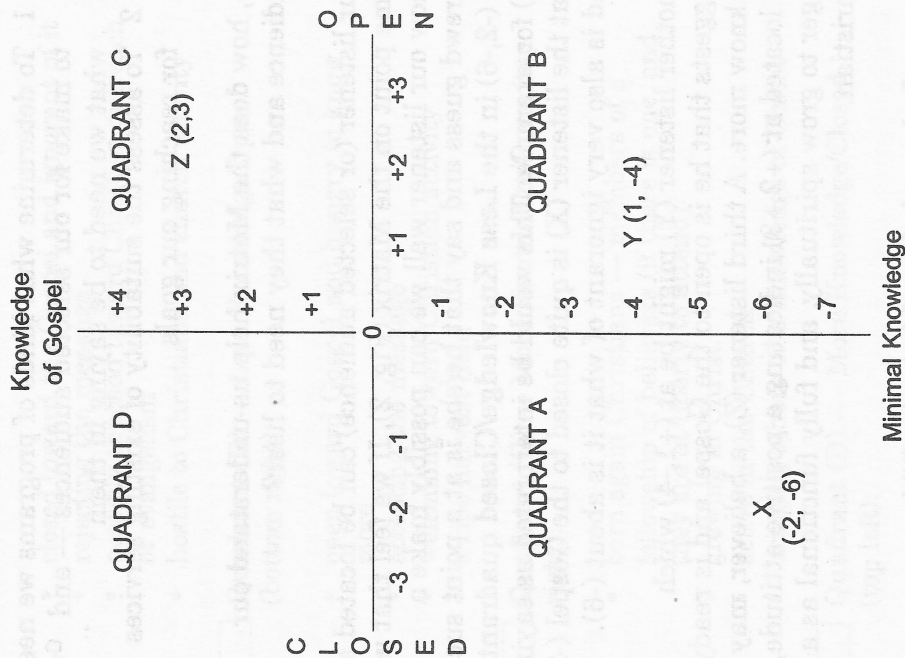
Our listener (or selected audience) can be located at some point on the Matrix (Fig. 2). If we feel that we know our listener well we can possibly make a shrewd guess and say that he/she is at a point such as (-2,-6) in the **Less Knowledge/Closed** quadrant (A) for example. This would be interpreted as saying that the listener (X) is quite closed to the Gospel (-2), and is also very ignorant of what it is about (-6).

Another listener (Y) might be at (+1,-4) which suggests that he is open to the Gospel and is ready to know more. A third listener (Z), a believer, may be located at (+2,+3) indicating a positive attitude, eager to grow spiritually, and fully functional as a Christian.

We can find people like this in the Bible:

- In the Old Testament Jezebel and Ahab (I Kings 16-22) resolutely turned their backs on anything to do with God. A New Testament equivalent

Fig. 2 Locating the Listener



might have been King Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded. On the Matrix they might be at (-3,-4) in the Less Knowledge/Closed quadrant (A).

The Woman at the Well (John 4) would clearly be in the Less Knowledge/Open quadrant (B) — though her spiritual understanding was far more than minimal. Her openness to receive Jesus' teaching demonstrated an appetite for spiritual truth that developed as their conversation progressed. Put her at (+2,-3).

Who should we nominate for the More Knowledge/Open quadrant (C)? How about one of the disciples — John? Or we could choose the apostle Paul as he moved from (-2,-3) in the Less Knowledge/Closed quadrant (A), say, to (+3,+4) in the More Knowledge/Open quadrant (C) and beyond. In fact we could name a wide variety of individuals who were totally committed to serving Christ.

The O.T. prophet, Balaam (Numbers 23-24), might serve as an example of some in the More Knowledge/Closed quadrant (D). Or perhaps even King Saul in his older days.

These are, of course, guesses to illustrate the point. In a real life situation today we need to be more careful in our assessment of where people are. Guessing is not very objective and can easily reflect a poor understanding of the audience and where

they are — both spiritually, and in their real openness to the Gospel. To conduct a research study would be much more enlightening. A good example of this is the *Bangkok All Media Penetration* study which used clustered samples to pinpoint attitudes and the levels of understanding held by different sectors of the Thai populace in Bangkok (Sogaard, 1979).

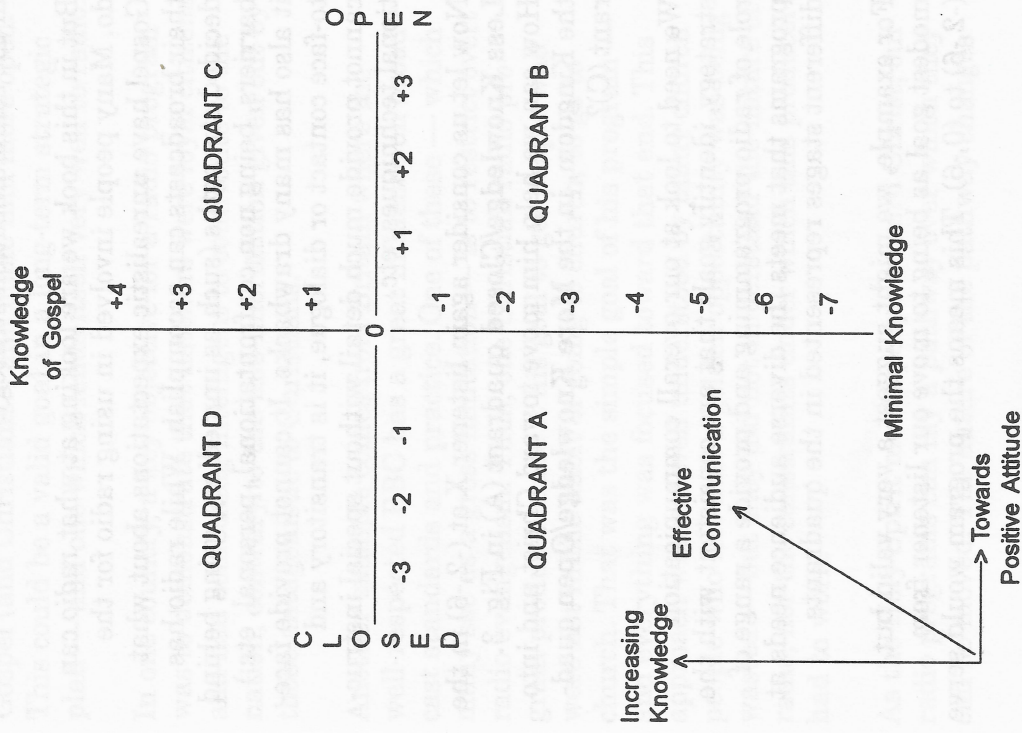
Our overall purpose in our communication is to move our listener toward the **More Knowledge/Open quadrant (C)** so that he can grow in Christ as a member of a local fellowship of believers (Fig. 3).

This involves two components (Fig. 3):

- the vertical component (a person cannot come to faith without a basic understanding, although this will vary from one person to another), and
- the horizontal (which indicates that for a person to come to faith they must have an open attitude to the Gospel and toward God).

Once we can identify with a degree of certainty where our listener is located then we can begin to design our evangelistic strategy. This may be by radio alone (if we have no other options) or preferably by using a variety of media or forms of out-

Fig. 3 Moving the Listener



reach, each contributing its own relative strengths in the communication strategy.

But in this book we are looking at what radio can do. Many people involved in using radio for the Gospel have unrealistic expectations about what their broadcasts can accomplish. While radio has decided strengths (such as immediacy, going behind barriers, being non-confrontational, personal, etc.) it also has many drawbacks. It cannot provide face-to-face contact or dialogue, it is transitory and cannot provide much detail without special instructional techniques, etc.

Now let us consider again listener X at (-2,-6) in the **Less Knowledge/Closed quadrant (A)** in Fig. 3. How can we help him move toward Christ and into the Kingdom, in the **More Knowledge/Open quadrant (C)**?

We need to look at our overall communication strategy, identify goals that are consistent with the role of radio programming and provide a range of programs that meets the diverse audience needs at different stages represented in the quadrants.

For example, we might suggest a very valid but modest goal as being to *move* our listener from (-2,-6) to (0,-6). This means the program would serve

to break down the listener's prejudices toward the Gospel (and Christians?) and make him more open. This could be a valid goal in a long-term strategic plan — and one which lends itself very well to radio.

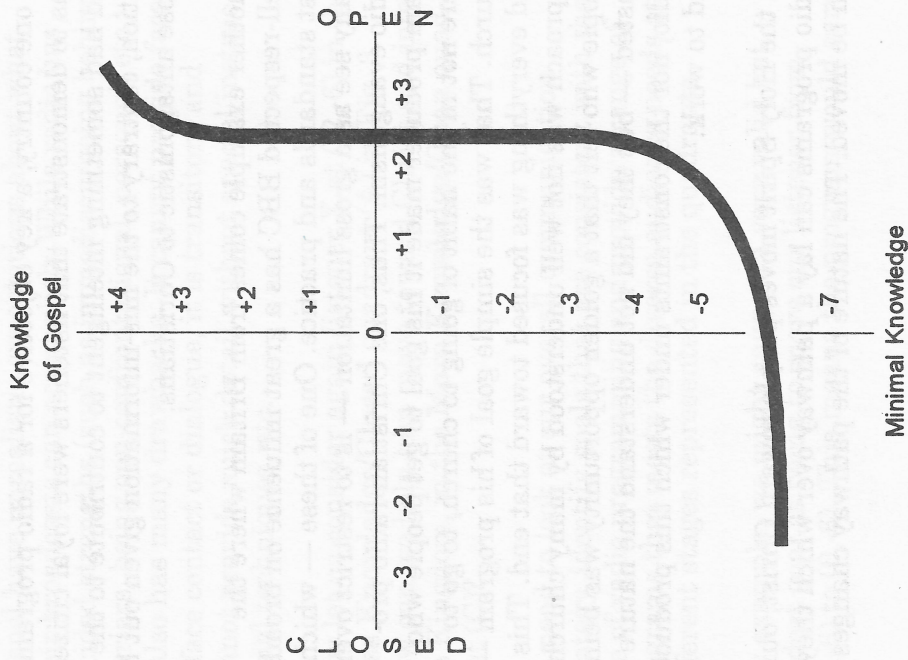
In one country, a key objective for a radio program was to demonstrate that listeners were loyal citizens and had something intelligent to contribute to the nation, contrary to the mis-information given out by those antagonistic to Christians.

Another example comes from Britain where the well-respected BBC has a great influence on broadcast standards and practice. One of these — which many see as a gross limitation — is to restrict overt radio evangelism. Thus, one Christian radio program producer made it his goal to get people who were not in the habit of going to church, to go to church. That was the simple goal of his program — and everything was focused toward that end. This approach was not well understood by many church people who felt that a golden opportunity was being wasted — but they did not understand the nature of radio, nor the constraints under which this producer had to work.

As the Holy Spirit moves people toward Christ, our radio programs can lay a pathway over which they can be moved. The nature of the pathway changes

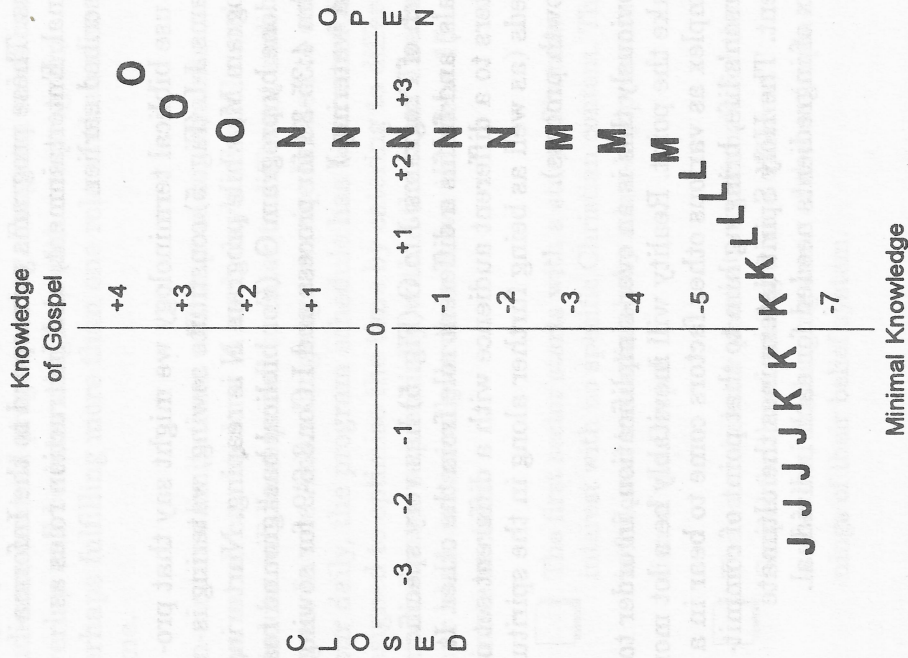
during the process, and it may look something like this (Fig. 4):

Fig. 4 The Pathway



But what is that pathway made up of? If we look more closely we may find the following (Fig. 5):

Fig. 5 The Programming Pathway



Different programs in Fig. 5 (Program J, Program K, Program L, Program M, Program N, Program O) all helped pave the way for his attitude toward the Gospel, together with his awareness, knowledge, and understanding of it, to grow as part of a process. These programs correspond to the Informational, Entertainment, and Instruction roles as described earlier.

To use biblical terminology we might say that programs J-L (Fig. 5) constitute sowing, watering is program M, while program N is reaping. Nurturing is done by program O. (For biblical background read John 4:35-38 for process and I Cor.3:6-9 for sowing and watering.)

Each of Programs J to O (Fig. 5) has very specific goals, and fulfils a different role from the other. It caters to a different audience with a different set of needs (as well as being further along in the spiritual growth process).

Obviously this is an over-simplification, in order to make the point. Reality will inevitably be a lot more complex as various other factors come to bear in a person's life, bringing him to that point of commitment. The Holy Spirit determines the ultimate mix of ingredients needed for each individual.

## HOW WELL DOES THE JIGSAW FIT?

Each piece of the jigsaw puzzle has a unique place where it fits. Fitting together various kinds of programs allows for a lot more creative, purposive, audience-centred programming. Program roles can overlap and be intermingled, with one program perhaps fulfilling more than one role at the same time.

On-air time limitations will impose constraints on how much can be done in each day's schedule and wisdom will be required to cater to different audiences. In one Asian language service limited to one hour daily, the program schedule has been carefully designed to optimise the time by catering to different audiences sequentially within the hour. The one-hour block is basically broken down into four 15-minute sectors:

- The first sector starts with a story of human interest with no specific Christian content. This is followed immediately by a low-key presentation of the Gospel.
- The second sector presents a rationale for the Gospel for those coming from a different worldview, challenging some of the underpinnings of their belief system.



In the third fifteen minutes the emphasis moves toward specific teaching for Christians, while by the fourth sector emphasises Bible-school type training for pastors and lay leaders.

In this manner program content becomes progressively theological as the broadcast continues. As listeners understand more they are drawn into listening for longer periods and more regularly. Audiences will respond to programs — and move on. We need to move with them, but what do we do with those who move in behind to take their place?

In one country, a program designed to move people from the *Less Knowledge/Closed* quadrant (A) to being more open had very little specific Christian terminology. It looked instead at lifestyle and social issues from an implicit Christian worldview through drama, discussion, and other formats. After some time, listeners began asking specific questions about Christianity. A 15-minute program was then added to the schedule, aired immediately after the original core program on one night each week. This second program enabled the producers to raise more specific Christian issues and topics; after all, because the listeners were now asking the questions, the producers now had *permission* to talk about these things. The listeners were ready. They had been prepared. The original program remained untouched, however, to keep on preparing others still in process on the *pathway*, not yet ready for more direct Christian programs.

This all leads us back to the theme of this book: *roles*. It is not hard to see that various roles will be appropriate for listeners moving through the quadrants, at various points along the pathway. Let us look at them briefly once more:

○ INFORMATION —  
News and Current Affairs

This kind of program — though Christian in orientation — will approximate very closely to what the listener expects to find on other stations. As such it is non-threatening and speaks to the listener in terms that are familiar. It would be applicable to listeners in any of the four quadrants.

○ ENTERTAINMENT —  
Enjoyment and Relaxation

Again, a non-threatening, easy listening style of programming to establish a relationship and trust. Also suitable to a wide spectrum of the listening audience.

○ INSTRUCTION —  
Functioning as Teachers

This is where we find ourselves getting more specific since instruction should be levelled at listeners according to their level of understanding. Just as we do not feed advanced

mathematics to beginners, neither do we feed the Gospel to those who would find biblical concepts and terminology foreign.

**ADVOCATING CHANGE —  
Acting as Agents for Change in a  
Broken World**

This could be pitched at a variety of levels, but will be used to emphasise the active dimensions of the Gospel that have an outworking in society.

**INSPIRATION —  
Hope, Friendship and Companionship**

Such programs could be used to come alongside listeners in a wide variety of situations based on their needs. If a low level of understanding of the Gospel is assumed such programs could help a wide spectrum of people, otherwise they could be tailored to specific needs and situations.

**POSITIONING —  
Promoting Awareness of Christian Social Concern  
and Action**

This has a two-pronged approach — primarily in raising the awareness of what Christians are doing in society. It is an indirect form of

promoting the Gospel and its relevance to today's society with its situations and problems. The second prong helps inform Christians.

**WITNESS —  
Testifying to God's Presence and Activities**

This places the reality of God into contemporary life. There will be spinoffs for Christian listeners, too, in the form of encouragement and affirmation, but its greatest effectiveness must be seen as an evangelistic tool.

**APOLOGETIC —  
Comparing Christian Belief with Others**

Designed to challenge the fundamental inadequacies of a worldview which does not make provision for a loving God who cares for the individual and has made provision for him. Such programs unashamedly set forth the validity of the Gospel.

**PROCLAMATION —  
Declaring the Whole Gospel**

Without compromise these programs are designed for those who are open to learn more and are moving closer to belief.

**COUNSELLING —  
Being Close to Our Listener**

Technically, these kinds of programs would be for anyone who has questions of a social, personal or spiritual nature. The kinds of issues covered will largely determine what audience the program is pitched to. Conversely, the kind of audience attracted to the program will be largely determined by the issues raised.

**SUPPLEMENTARY —  
Providing Helpful Resources**

Meeting practical needs in ways appropriate to radio programming.

**CELEBRATION —  
Celebrating with Joy the Gospel in all its Fullness**

Clearly, this is primarily intended for the Christian audience. The program creates a celebration experience for them.

**MODELLING —  
Demonstrating Christian Community**

Believers will feel the universality of the Christian community, regardless of denomination, label or nationality.

**PARTICIPATORY —  
Interaction and Listener Involvement**

For all who listen, but a very important dimension that serves to transcend the one-directional limitations of radio.

As we said earlier, the Matrix serves us in two very useful ways — for planning and for analysing existing programming.

If you are already involved in planning program schedules, applying the Matrix to each of these programs in turn can prove to be a very enlightening exercise. Identify the intended audience and then check various elements in the program to see how well the form and content match this audience. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Will the listener find this program easy to understand?
- Does it touch the problems and the hopes of that listener?
- Does this provide an accurate reflection of the listener's culture?
- How does this acknowledge the questions and difficulties likely to be in the listener's mind?
- Is the format appropriate to a) the purpose of the program? b) the listener?

## THE BEGINNING

Usually this section would be the *Conclusion* or *Summary*, drawing together into a final statement all that has been presented. We consider this the *beginning*. It is the start of your vision and creativity as you consider how the different roles of radio can become a part of your programming strategy in your situation.

Remember, FEBC Training can provide consultancy and training in all these and other topics.

Here are some activities and questions you might like to consider to begin your journey of discovery:

- 1 Take a copy of your own program schedule(s) and analyse which roles are represented by each of the programs (some programs may exemplify more than one role). What roles dominate your schedule? Why do they dominate? How well suited are they to your audience(s)?
- 2 Which of the above roles do you think need applying to programs and be added to your schedule?
- 3 What help, further information, or training do you need in order to develop the skills and resources necessary to implement the new roles in your program schedule?

What other themes or implications or concepts could be included to give the listener a deep sense of involvement with the topic and the program?

What illustrations are suitable and what are not?

Is the language appropriate? Give examples of unfamiliar words/concepts not adequately explained.

These questions, by the way, are a part of a peer evaluation exercise which we advocate as an essential tool for your producers. The checklist is in Appendix 1.

Once this is done it will reveal the audiences your programs are targeted to, whether they are missing the mark (your intended audiences!), and the overall balance of your broadcast schedule.

Program staff in one country went through this exercise in a workshop and found *all* their current programs were directed to Christian audiences in the **More Knowledge/ Open quadrant (C)**! This was in a country where the need for evangelism was high and the opportunities great.

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### Appendix 1

#### The PEPMEET Approach to Programming

by Ross James

##### Introduction

No matter where I go in Asia, radio producers talk about these common difficulties: maintaining broadcast standards, planning new topics and ideas, and being creative. This didn't happen when I was working in commercial radio because we producers regularly met to coordinate our programs, comment on each other's work, share resources and get ideas from our colleagues for future programs.

I find this doesn't always happen in the studios I visit. Producers think they have no time to collaborate with their peers. They usually are not encouraged to do so by supervisors. I have been told by management that their producers were there to work, not talk to colleagues. This is short-sighted. Producers become dry or lack vision and direction if they do not receive input. In one studio, over half the producers had never heard their colleagues' programs! When they began using this PEPMEET (Program Evaluation and Planning Meeting) the radio producers became excited. They established and maintained new levels of productivity and enthusiasm.

##### What is the PEPMEET Process?

Producers regularly meet to evaluate and discuss each others' programs, with the aid of the PEPMEET checklist. Producers suggest to the program producer how that program could be improved next time. They also suggest ideas or topics for future programs. Finally, the producers discuss ways in which that program could be linked or integrated with other programs in a program schedule.

##### Why do PEPMEETs work?

- 1 A specific time is regularly set aside to evaluate programs and plan new ones.
- 2 Individual producers learn new things as they listen to, discuss and evaluate others' programs.
- 3 PEPMEETs are efficient. Time is saved and more is achieved when producers brainstorm or suggest a wide range of ideas to a program producer.
- 4 A sense of community develops as producers become familiar with each other's programs and understand the purpose of other's programs. They get a sense of where their own program fits into or contributes to the overall programming picture.
- 5 Producers can liaise with each other to share resources.
- 6 PEPMEETs strengthen a programming schedule as producers coordinate topics and programs, avoiding overlap.

## The Eight PEPMEET Steps

**Step 1.** *Decide a suitable time for all producers to meet together.* One-to-two hours, once a week is preferable. Choose someone (not that program's producer) to facilitate the session. Give everyone a copy of the checklist.

**Step 2.** *Play a program.* All participants evaluate it, using the checklist as they listen. All participants should present their programs in turn over a period of time. The frequency depends on how many programs are produced in the studio, and the length allocated for the PEPMEET. Experience shows that two 15-minute programs each week is appropriate for a one-hour PEPMEET or three programs in a two-hour session. Programs can be randomly selected. Or, you may want to consider evaluating programs in the same PEPMEET that contain similar components, such as all programs that include health (e.g., your women's and youth program's) or drama. The advantage of this "thematic" approach is that you get an overall perspective of content and producers' competencies in that area.

*Note:* Steps 3-8 should be quick but not superficial, thorough but not laborious. Fifteen or 20 minutes is usually adequate. The purpose is to raise ideas and issues. The individual producer can have extended and in-depth discussion with anybody after the

PEPMEET. Any emerging serious issue should be dealt with at another time.

**Step 3.** *What was liked?* Ask participants to say what they liked in the program and why they liked it. It can be about anything related to checklist items or other things. Invite anyone to state anything they might have learned about production or scriptwriting techniques (e.g., "I liked the way you asked that question in the interview. I'll shape my question like that in future. . . ." Or, "I realised that . . ." or "I learned . . ." etc).

**Step 4.** *What could be improved?* The purpose of this step is to identify things about the program which could be improved. The checklist will help identify weaknesses. However, the facilitator must strictly keep the participants to stating their views in a positive way. Nobody should be allowed to give negative, unrestrained criticism of the program or the producer. It should not get into an argument. It is meant to be helpful to the producer. Useful techniques include the facilitator insisting that the participants begin in this way: "If I were to make this program I would (positive suggestion)." Another way is to insist that participants start sentences with: "Next time, you might want to think about (positive suggestion)."

**Step 5.** *The producer responds.* The program producer quickly responds to the previous comments,

explaining why he or she did certain things in the program, or giving details of difficulties and problems faced when making that particular program. He or she may want to mention difficulties or frustrations faced in the program series. The facilitator can encourage some question and answer, discussion and sharing of ideas or experience.

**Step 6. Brainstorm.** Allow several minutes for the participants to suggest to the producer, new topics, resources, people to contact and any other ideas or suggestions related to the program. We have found the producer is kept busy writing!

**Step 7. What cross-program linkages are possible?** In one studio where I demonstrated the PEPMEET, we evaluated three programs. One was for women, another was an educational program and a third was for youth. Amazingly, each one dealt with forgiveness. Imagine, three producers unknowingly had gone to the same books to get the same information, and sat at their desks writing similar ideas! We discussed the following benefits if the producers had talked to each other before making their program. 1) Coordinated efforts would save preparation time. 2) Each producer could have focussed on a different aspect of the topic related specifically to their audience, rather than trying to cover everything in their own program! 3) Further, coordination could have demonstrated unity within a program schedule and promoted other programs. For example, the producer of each program could have

mentioned to his or her listeners that other programs were talking about another aspect of the topic and given the broadcast times of those programs. In this seventh step of the PEPMEET, the program producer should mention upcoming programs he or she is planning. See if other producers are thinking of the same or a similar thing. What resources can be shared? How can they be coordinated? See if it is possible for several other producers to use the same topic, but from a different perspective for their audience, and promote each others' programs.

**Step 8. Continue the process.** Either go back to step 1 to evaluate another program or make arrangements for the next PEPMEET. Select another facilitator and decide which programs will be evaluated. When and where will the PEPMEET take place?

#### A final note

In the Framing section of the checklist, add items suited to your requirements and delete those that are not. Make the PEPMEET work for you.



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### Checklist

radio program as you

mer here:

much you think matches the

d:

Above average broadcast standard = 4  
 standard (The normal requirement) = 3  
 broadcast standard (Some things need  
 improvement; despite faults it can still be aired) = 2  
 Not broadcast standard (There are some things  
 which prevent this being aired) = 1

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 Will the listener find this program<br>easy to understand?             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.2 Does this touch the problems and<br>the hopes of that listener?        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.3 Does this provide an accurate<br>reflection of the listener's culture? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.4 Does this demonstrate enough<br>research of the topic?                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.5 Does this demonstrate enough time<br>preparing the program?            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.6 How well organised is the program?<br>Do thoughts flow clearly?        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.7 Is the program of satisfactory<br>technical quality?                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- 2.8 Are the characters or presenter and  
their voices suitable and/or  
credible? 1 2 3 4
- 2.9 If music is used, is it a) appropriate?  
b) effective? c) of satisfactory  
technical quality? 1 2 3 4
- 2.10 Is the purpose clear? Or, does  
content obscure the purpose? 1 2 3 4

Add your ratings and divide by 10 to give an overall  
broadcast standard: \_\_\_\_\_

Be prepared to give examples to justify your score.

### 3 FRAMING (Discuss these in the group)

- 3.1 How does this acknowledge the questions and  
difficulties likely to be in the listener's mind?
- 3.2 How practical are the suggestions/ lessons for  
the audience?
- 3.3 Is the format appropriate to a) the purpose of  
the program? b) the listener?
- 3.4 What other themes or implications or concepts  
could be included to give the listener a deeper  
sense of involvement with the topic and the  
program?
- 3.5 What illustrations are suitable and what are  
not?
- 3.6 Give examples of the producer's imaginative  
and creative handling of this subject:  
a) Imaginative/creative:  
b) Not imaginative/creative:

### The PEPMEET Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate the radio program as you listen to it.

1 Write the intended audience/listener here:

#### 2 OVERVIEW

Circle the number which you think matches the broadcast standard:

- Above average broadcast standard = 4  
 Broadcast standard (The normal requirement) = 3  
 Just broadcast standard (Some things need improvement; despite faults it can still be aired) = 2  
 Not broadcast standard (There are some things which prevent this being aired) = 1

- 2.1 Will the listener find this program easy to understand? 1 2 3 4  
 2.2 Does this touch the problems and the hopes of that listener? 1 2 3 4  
 2.3 Does this provide an accurate reflection of the listener's culture? 1 2 3 4  
 2.4 Does this demonstrate enough research of the topic? 1 2 3 4  
 2.5 Does this demonstrate enough time preparing the program? 1 2 3 4  
 2.6 How well organised is the program? Do thoughts flow clearly? 1 2 3 4  
 2.7 Is the program of satisfactory technical quality? 1 2 3 4

2.8 Are the characters or presenter and their voices suitable and/or credible? 1 2 3 4

2.9 If music is used, is it a) appropriate?

b) effective? c) of satisfactory technical quality? 1 2 3 4

2.10 Is the purpose clear? Or, does content obscure the purpose? 1 2 3 4

Add your ratings and divide by 10 to give an overall broadcast standard: \_\_\_\_\_

Be prepared to give examples to justify your score.

#### 3 FRAMING (Discuss these in the group)

3.1 How does this acknowledge the questions and difficulties likely to be in the listener's mind?

3.2 How practical are the suggestions/ lessons for the audience?

3.3 Is the format appropriate to a) the purpose of the program? b) the listener?

3.4 What other themes or implications or concepts could be included to give the listener a deeper sense of involvement with the topic and the program?

3.5 What illustrations are suitable and what are not?

3.6 Give examples of the producer's imaginative and creative handling of this subject:

- a) Imaginative/creative:  
 b) Not imaginative/creative:

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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- 3.7 Is the language appropriate? Give examples of unfamiliar words/concepts not adequately explained.
- 3.8 Does this encourage listener response? What could be done to do so?
- 3.9 Is there linkage between the opening, mid-point and closing? Is there connection and momentum throughout the program?
- 3.10 Is there an opportunity for cross promotion between programs?
- 4 Any other comments: